


Heritage

We are at risk of losing many of our Hoosier memories. The threat to thousands of historical objects and documents in Indiana from lack of resources is real and ongoing.

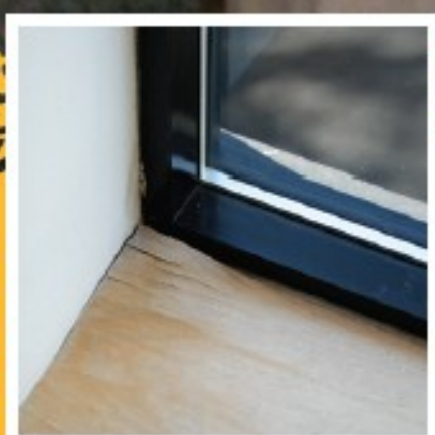
These collections represent our heritage and legacy.

The following banners depict some of the most common dangers to collections. Thankfully, there are solutions. Together we can make a difference in saving Indiana's history.

Count me  IN

Saving Hoosier Heritage ... together!

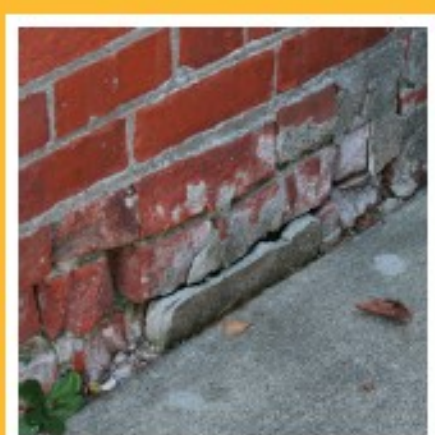
Indiana Treasures



Copyright Center for Digital Library



Indiana Historical Society



Copyright Center for Digital Library

Buildings

Nearly half of heritage collecting organizations in Indiana are without a regular building maintenance routine.

– Hoosier Heritage Alliance: Connecting to Collections Survey Report, 2009

The buildings that house collections are the first line of defense against harmful agents. Whether the issue is security, environmental conditions, or pests, it all starts with the facility.

Every building will have problems over time and at some point might fail to properly protect its contents. Some problems, such as leaks, occur from elements and forces affecting the outside of the building. Other problems, such as condensation on walls or windows, come from a combination of issues.

- © TOP: A warped window sill is evidence of problems with the building.
- © CENTER: Ice dams can cause roof damage and leaks.
- © BOTTOM: Wall crumbling and cracking can allow pests and water to enter the building.
- © BACKGROUND: A decaying window allows other problems to develop.

What our heritage organizations need now...

- » Funding for building preservation
- » Funding for preventative maintenance
- » Building improvements, as needed

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Light

“Even small amounts of light will cause damage. Damage as a result of exposure to light is cumulative. It cannot be reversed.”

– National Park Service Museum Handbook, Part I, 1999

Is a lot of light always a good thing? Around collections the careful control of illumination is important. Light is energy, and it causes permanent damage to many objects and documents.

Ultraviolet light is particularly harmful and is present in sunlight and fluorescent lighting. Photographs, watercolors, paper items, textiles, and certain plastics are especially sensitive to light.

- © TOP: Exposure to fluorescent lighting can damage paintings.
- © CENTER: Fading and discoloration occurs to photographs from prolonged exposure to light.
- © BOTTOM: Paper often yellows and becomes brittle from light.
- © BACKGROUND: This fabric was faded by light exposure.

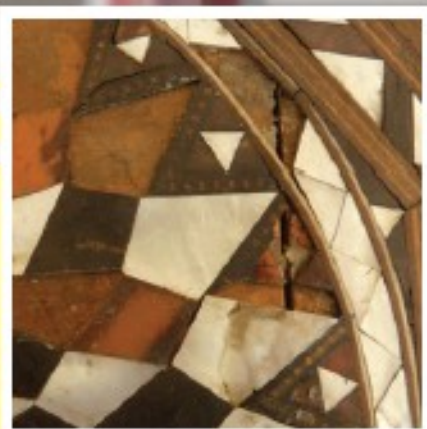
What our heritage organizations need now...

- » UV-filtering covers for fluorescent lights
- » UV filters for windows, cases, and picture frames
- » Appropriate lighting for collections and exhibit areas

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110

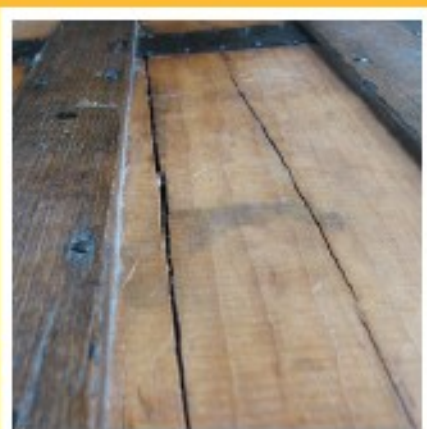
90



Carmel/Howe Museum, Springfield, Missouri



Carmel/Howe Museum, Springfield, Missouri



Indiana Collection

Temperature

The majority of heritage collecting organizations lack monitoring equipment for their main facility.

— Hoosier Heritage Alliance: Connecting to Collections Survey Report, 2009

Temperature changes—as well as extreme heat or cold—can cause cracking, brittleness, and deterioration. Paper items, photographic materials, textiles, and natural science specimens are especially susceptible to damage from temperature extremes.

Uncontrolled areas such as attics and warehouses can be blistering hot part of the time and freezing cold at other times. Climates of all collections areas, including storage, need to be monitored and regulated.

- © TOP: Temperature changes can cause mosaic adhesive to fail.
- © CENTER: Inconsistent temperatures can damage artwork.
- © BOTTOM: Wood cracks when exposed to fluctuations in temperature.
- © BACKGROUND: Variable temperatures cause objects to deteriorate.

What our heritage organizations need now...

- » Equipment to monitor and track temperature
- » Climate-controlled storage and exhibit areas

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10

-10

-30

°F



Humidity

Almost half of heritage collecting organizations do not have humidity controlled at the recommended levels.

— Hoosier Heritage Alliance: Connecting to Collections Survey Report, 2009

When levels of humidity drop too low, wood can split and laminates and veneers can peel. When indoor humidity levels get too high, fungi and other pests become active. Mildew creates stains. Rot can occur. Metals can pit and corrode from exposure to excessive humidity.

Many objects are composed of more than one material. When these materials expand or contract at different rates, bonds can break and objects can start to come apart.

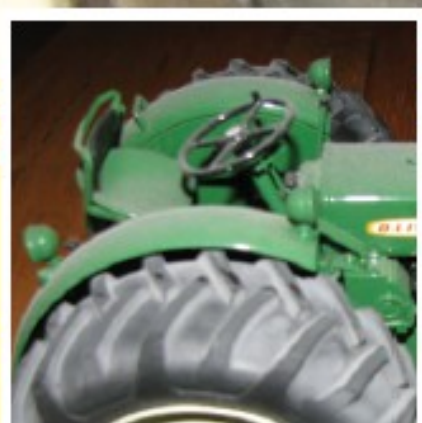
- © TOP: Excessive humidity caused this pastel drawing to warp.
- © CENTER: Basement storage conditions caused this ledger to deteriorate.
- © BOTTOM: Humidity caused mold to grow on this doll.
- © BACKGROUND: Excessive humidity caused this lamp finial to rust.

What our heritage organizations need now...

- » *Equipment to monitor and control humidity*
- » *Upgrades to heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems*
- » *Alterations to the building may be necessary*

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Tractor on location



Montgomery County Historical Society



Montgomery County Historical Society

Pollutants

"Analysis of dust [from] the Star-Spangled Banner . . . showed a very high percentage of blue cotton fibers—lint from blue jeans worn by visitors."

— R. Androsko, Curator of Textiles
National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution

Dust and pollutants are part of the natural world and of human activity, and all are hazards for collections. Some pollutants actually alter materials chemically. Many metals corrode from airborne pollution. Other pollutants are abrasive and scratch objects. Some embed into objects and cause soiling.

Proper prevention is important because removal of pollutants can damage the object. Some effects of dust and pollutants are practically irreversible.

- ☉ TOP: Plaster dust can cause damage to painted surfaces.
- ☉ CENTER: Pollutants and other environmental factors caused this trunk to deteriorate.
- ☉ BOTTOM: Air pollutants caused this painting to darken.
- ☉ BACKGROUND: Pollutants can damage silver.

What our heritage organizations need now...

- » Updated ventilation systems
- » Training about proper cleaning and monitoring procedures

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Pests

"[Pest] damage can ultimately destroy a museum object. Therefore, it is important to constantly monitor collections for evidence of pest activity."

— National Park Service Conserve O Gram, Number 3/11, August 2008

Pests are troublesome to all collections. Insects and rodents can quickly degrade an object as they feed and nest. Beetles, moths, and silverfish can bore through and destroy natural materials. Rodents can chew through an object. Pest debris can stain objects.

- © TOP: Silverfish damaged this print.
- © CENTER: Rodents chewed on this paper.
- © BOTTOM: Insects made holes in this fabric and left behind debris and carcasses.
- © BACKGROUND: Termites destroyed this wood.

What our heritage organizations need now...

- » Resources to regularly inspect collections
- » Training on recognizing and dealing with pests
- » Equipment to monitor and control exhibit and storage areas

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Conservation: Robyn Stiefel Museum



Conservation: Robyn Stiefel Museum



Conservation: Robyn Stiefel Museum

Handle with Care

"Many organizations lack funding for staff training in collections stewardship; especially training in the proper conservation, preservation, and management of their collections."

— Hoosier Heritage Alliance: Connecting to Collections Survey Report, 2009

Just lifting or moving an object can cause damage. Flags, rugs, and clothing are prone to tear or fall apart when handled. Photographs are easily damaged by oils from our skin when touched.

Overcrowding in displays—because of lack of space or inappropriate display materials—can result in collections damage, too. Documents and photographs get creased or folded from overloaded files.

- © TOP: Pieces are missing from this statue, due to its being dropped.
- © CENTER: The canvas on this painting has been damaged from improper handling.
- © BOTTOM: Heavy handling has embedded dirt into this paper parade hat.
- © BACKGROUND: This vase was broken due to improper handling.

What our heritage organizations need now...

- » Sufficient and appropriate display materials
- » Training on proper handling, storage, and exhibit procedures

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Storage

"Sixty-two percent of heritage collecting organizations describe their collections area as 'full' or 'crowded.'"

— Hoosier Heritage Alliance: Connecting to Collections Survey Report, 2009

Objects that are folded, on top of each other, or crowded into small spaces, are more likely to suffer damage and deterioration. Storage in household storage containers, such as corrugated cardboard boxes and plastic tubs, causes objects and documents to deteriorate over time. This is due to acids, solvents, and plastics used in their manufacture.

- © TOP: Objects on floors or stacked against walls are prone to damage.
- © CENTER: Corrugated cardboard boxes and packing tape are not archivally safe.
- © BOTTOM: This paper is stuck to the surface of a painting that was improperly stored.
- © BACKGROUND: Wire hangers and plastic bags will damage textiles.

What our heritage organizations need now...

- » *Safe, archival storage materials*
- » *Coated metal shelving or sealed wooden shelves*
- » *Additional and appropriate storage space*

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Water

Nearly half of heritage collecting organizations have had water infiltration problems.

— Hoosier Heritage Alliance: Connecting to Collections Survey Report, 2009

Water damage can be catastrophic to collections. Many, if not most, items in collections can be harmed from contact with water. A burst pipe or leaking basement or roof might go unnoticed, causing collections loss or the need for an extensive conservation effort.

Flooding from a natural disaster is the most extreme and devastating water damage. Prevention may be impossible, but preparation is essential.

- © TOP: Mold growth on this ceiling was caused by moisture infiltration.
- © CENTER: These stains were caused by water damage.
- © BOTTOM: Water stained this manuscript.
- © BACKGROUND: Water causes paper to deteriorate.

What our heritage organizations need now...

- » Funding for safe storage
- » Water monitoring equipment
- » Disaster preparedness training

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To Protect

"A unique object lost through theft or vandalism represents a loss of knowledge for future generations."

— A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report, 2005

Security is an issue for all collections. Small objects on display in unsecured cases or without cases can be easily stolen when no one is looking. Sadly, vandalism can occur, too.

A more common security problem is our basic human desire to touch things. Children and adults alike will be drawn to touch an object if it is available to do so. The dirt and oils from our skin will degrade objects over time.

- © TOP: Vandals broke this window.
- © CENTER: A name was carved into a table.
- © BOTTOM: An unsupervised child tore the pages in this book.
- © BACKGROUND: Graffiti is a security problem and can be difficult to remove.

What our heritage organizations need now...

- » Resources to fully catalog collections so theft can be detected
- » Secure display cases
- » Electronic security systems

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***Make a contribution for
collections care or volunteer
at your local heritage
organization today!***

Count me



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*"Providing a safe environment and proper care
for collections is a fundamental responsibility
of all institutions and individuals who care
about our heritage."*

— A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report, 2005

Hoosier Heritage Alliance Partners:

- » *Allen County Public Library*
- » *Association of Indiana Museums*
- » *Carnegie Center for Art and History, New Albany*
- » *Center for History, South Bend*
- » *Conner Prairie Interactive History Park*
- » *Cunningham Memorial Library, Indiana State University*
- » *Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art*
- » *Evansville Museum*
- » *Indiana Historical Society*
- » *Indiana Landmarks*
- » *Indianapolis Museum of Art*
- » *Indiana State Museum*
- » *Midwest Collaborative for Library Services*
- » *Minnetrista*



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